



NLS Handbook, 2001

U.S. Department of Labor
Elaine L. Chao, Secretary

Bureau of Labor Statistics
Katharine G. Abraham, Commissioner

2001

Preface

The *NLS Handbook* is intended to provide an introduction to and overall picture of the National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS) to those unfamiliar with the surveys and their data. It contains general information about the surveys, a description of the contents of each year of the surveys, and information on acquiring and using the data. The handbook includes tables that provide descriptions of the variables in the data, and gives the years for which those variables are

available.

The NLS are sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. The National Longitudinal Surveys program is housed within the Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics at BLS. Michael Horrigan heads the NLS program, which includes a staff of research economists who work with NLS data and assist in developing NLS products.

Acknowledgments

BLS thanks numerous Federal agencies that have supported the NLS throughout the years, particularly the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor, which initiated the NLS and sponsored the surveys from 1965 through 1986. Other supporting agencies include: The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Institute on Aging, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the Social Security Administration, the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, the Department of Education, the National School-to-Work Office, and the Women's Bureau and the Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration of the Department of Labor.

BLS also thanks the NLS contractors for their work in

data collection, production, distribution, user services, and overall survey management. BLS contracts with the Center for Human Resource Research (CHRR) at The Ohio State University, the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, and the Census Bureau for these services. The Principal Investigator for the NLSY79 and NLSW is Randall Olsen of The Ohio State University, and the Principal Investigator for the NLSY97 is Jim Walker of the University of Wisconsin.

Finally, BLS thanks the thousands of individuals who have participated in the NLS throughout the years. The long-term cooperation of NLS respondents is ultimately the most important factor in making the NLS such a valuable data resource.

Contents

CHAPTER 1: THE NLS	1
The NLS samples	1
Development of the NLS	1
Purposes and content of the surveys	2
NLS data sets	3
Uses of the NLS	3
Project administration	4
Current status and directions	5
Organization of this handbook	6
References	6
CHAPTER 2: THE NLSY97	7
Chapter organization	7
The NLSY97 samples	7
Multiple-respondent households	7
The NLSY97 interviews	7
Sampling weights	8
Survey instruments and special data collections	9
Major data elements	11
Data files and documentation	18
Selected variables by age and instrument: NLSY97	18
CHAPTER 3: THE NLSY79	29
Chapter organization	29
The NLSY79	29
The NLSY79 samples	29
Multiple-respondent households	30
The interviews	31
Attrition and sample drops	31
Sampling weights	31
Major data elements	31
Data files and documentation	37
References	37
Selected variables by survey year: NLSY79	38
CHAPTER 4: CHILDREN OF THE NLSY79	46
Chapter organization	46
The NLSY79 child sample	46
Sampling weights	47
The interviews	47
Major data elements	50
Data files and documentation	53
Selected variables by survey year: Children of the NLSY79	53
CHAPTER 5: THE NLS ORIGINAL COHORTS: MATURE AND YOUNG WOMEN	66
Chapter organization	66
The women's samples	66
Multiple-respondent households	66
Interviews and fielding periods	67
Attrition	68
Sampling weights	68

Contents—continued

Major data elements	68
Data files and documentation	76
References	76
Selected variables by cohort and year: Mature and young women	77
CHAPTER 6: THE NLS ORIGINAL COHORTS: OLDER AND YOUNG MEN	92
Chapter organization	92
The men's samples	92
Multiple-respondent households	92
Interviews and fielding periods	93
Attrition	94
Sampling weights	95
Major data elements	95
Data files and documentation	100
References	100
Selected variables by cohort and year: Older and young men	101
CHAPTER 7: A SAMPLER OF NLS RESEARCH	112
CHAPTER 8: NLS CD-ROMS AND DOCUMENTATION	122
Current CD-ROM releases	122
Hardware requirements	123
NLS CD-ROM software	123
Electronic documentation	124
NLS user's guides and paper documentation	124
NLSY97 documentation	127
NLSY79 documentation	128
NLSY79 child and young adult documentation	131
NLS original cohort documentation	132
NLS User Services Office	135
Note to individuals ordering geocode data	135
Note to customers outside the continental United States	135
CHAPTER 9: FOR MORE INFORMATION	136
<i>NLS News</i>	136
Technical manuals	136
Summary reports	138
NLS bibliography database	139
NLSY79 child bibliographies	139
Research analyses	139
NLS Publication Request Form	140

Tables

Table 1.1.	The NLS: Survey groups, sample sizes, interview years, and survey status	1
Table 2.1.	NLSY97 sample sizes by subsample, race/ethnicity, and gender	8
Table 2.2.	Round 1 distribution of NLSY97 respondents by household type	8
Table 2.3.	Round 1 distribution of NLSY97 sibling groups	8
Table 2.4.	NLSY97 sample sizes, retention rates, and fielding periods	9
Table 2.5.	NLSY97 youths and youths with parent interview by age	10
Table 2.6.	Data collected for nonresident relatives in NLSY97 round 1	17
Table 2.7.	Selected NLSY97 variables by survey round: Respondents aged 12 to 17 in 1997	20
Table 3.1.	Distribution of NLSY79 respondents by sample type, race/ethnicity, and sex	30
Table 3.2.	Number of NLSY79 civilian respondents by type of multiple respondent household (1979)	31
Table 3.3.	NLSY79 interview schedules and retention rates by sample types	32
Table 3.4.	NLSY79 response rates (excluding deceased respondents) by sample types	33
Table 3.5.	Selected NLSY79 variables by survey year: Respondents aged 14 to 22 in 1979	39
Table 4.1.	NLSY79 mother and child samples: 1986–98 surveys	47
Table 4.2.	NLSY79 child sample sizes by age and race/ethnicity: 1986–98 surveys	48
Table 4.3.	Distribution of child's age in 1998 by mother's age at birth of child: NLSY79 children and young adults assessed or interviewed in 1998	48
Table 4.4.	NLSY79 child assessments: Variations in administration by survey year	49
Table 4.5.	Numbers and percentages of children with valid assessment scores: Children of the NLSY79 in 1998	50
Table 4.6.	Selected variables by survey year: Children (birth to age 14) of the NLSY79	54
Table 4.7.	Selected variables by survey year: Young adult children (aged 15 and older) of the NLSY79	59
Table 5.1.	Number of respondents interviewed by cohort and race: Mature and young women	66
Table 5.2.	Number of respondent pairs by cohort and relationship identified during the initial survey years: NLS of Mature and Young Women	67
Table 5.3.	Interview schedules and retention rates: Mature and young women	69
Table 5.4.	Selected mature women variables by survey year: Respondents aged 30 to 44 in 1967	78
Table 5.5.	Selected young women variables by survey year: Respondents aged 14 to 24 in 1968	85
Table 6.1.	Number of respondents interviewed by cohort and race: Older and young men	92
Table 6.2.	Number of respondent pairs by cohort and relationship identified during the initial survey years: NLS of Older and Young Men	93
Table 6.3.	Interview schedules and retention rates: Older and young men	94
Table 6.4.	Selected older men variables by survey year: Respondents aged 45 to 59 in 1966	102
Table 6.5.	Selected young men variables by survey year: Respondents aged 14 to 24 in 1966	108
Table 8.1.	Mature and young women industry and occupation coding systems by survey year	132

Figures

Figure 1.1.	NLS data content: Core and supplemental data collections	3
Figure 1.2.	NLS main data files	4
Figure 1.3.	NLS special data files	5
Figure 2.1.	Resident parental hierarchy	10
Figure 2.2.	Contents of the <i>CAT-ASVAB</i>	11
Figure 2.3.	Data elements in the NLSY97	11
Figure 3.1.	Data elements in the NLSY79	33
Figure 4.1.	Data elements in the Children of the NLSY79	51
Figure 5.1.	Data elements in the NLS of Mature and Young Women	69
Figure 6.1.	Data elements in the NLS of Older and Young Men	95
Figure 8.1.	NLS CD-ROMs	122
Figure 8.2.	Extract screens for the original cohorts	125
Figure 8.3.	Tree structure listing: NLSY79 work history CD-ROM	126
Figure 8.4.	NLS supplemental documentation items	126
Figure 8.5.	Select NLSY79 work history CD files	131
Figure 9.1.	User's guide topical areas: NLSY97	137
Figure 9.2.	User's guide topical areas: Mature women (MW), young women (YW), and NLSY79 (79)	137